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This chapter positions the integration of critical perspectives in leadership development as imperative. Content introduces the integrated model of critical leadership development and outlines four steps to deepen the practice of critical leadership development in leadership education.

A Paradigm Shift in Leadership Education: Integrating Critical Perspectives Into Leadership Development

John P. Dugan, Alyssa D. Humbles

The clarity of hindsight helps us to recognize particular moments in time as inflection points. In these moments, we choose one path or another opting for the uncertainty of progress or the security of the status quo. In some cases, we see clearly how the choices we made or failed to make influenced an entire arc of our lives or our collective abilities to address the most compelling social, political, and scientific challenges facing society.

Educators find ourselves at just such an inflection point in leadership education. The question is whether we, as a community of educators, have the foresight to pivot in the direction of progress. As authors of this chapter, we fundamentally believe in our ability to do so, but it is no easy task and requires a willingness to interrogate what we know to be true, the foundations of our work, and our deepest values and commitments. It requires a radical shift in our educational paradigm from leadership development to critical leadership development.

This chapter introduces a means to lean into this inflection point in leadership education and shape the arc of our shared future toward advancing leadership development. To accomplish this, the chapter begins by framing why this moment is so important as well as the essential dimensions that define critical leadership development. The chapter then introduces and explains the integrated model of critical leadership development as a framework for educational practice. Three key recommendations are provided to guide leadership educators' work. Engaging in critical leadership

development in purposeful ways is essential if we hope to translate foresight into action.

The Radical Importance of Now

Before we shift to understanding exactly what critical leadership development is, let us set the stage and consider what defines this moment as an inflection point. The past several decades witnessed unprecedented growth in research, theory, and practice on youth leadership (Komives, 2009). There is no shortage of evidence to inform our work, and the complexity of thinking about leadership continues to expand at a rapid pace. All of this is coupled with (1) technological advances that both connect and constrain human relationships, (2) a social context in which youth voice is being heard and can be amplified at magnitudes previously unseen, and (3) a national milieu characterized by tensions between interdependence and diversity versus individualism and homogeneity. The result of this perfect societal storm is an increasing gap between what we say we value in leadership education and how we translate those values into practice.

The opportunities and challenges presented by technology and youth voice shine a spotlight brighter than we have ever before seen on the gaps between our espoused and actualized values in leadership education. More often than not, those gaps are defined by the tension points between interdependence and diversity versus individualism and homogeneity. Theories suggest that anyone can be a leader (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2014), yet the majority of content to which youth are exposed in our programs reflects an authorship that is dominantly White, male, cisgender, and heterosexual; the gap is apparent. Research suggests that dialogues about and across difference are the single greatest contributor to leadership development (Dugan & Komives, 2010; Dugan, Kodama, & Gebhardt, 2012), yet this pedagogy is not pervasively present in our curricula and cocurricula; the gap is apparent. Leadership practice extolls the power and importance of youth action (Ginwright & James, 2002; Kirschner, 2015; Komives, Wagner, & Associates, 2016), yet our institutions react with irritation, resistance, and far too often punishment when it actually occurs; the gap is apparent.

We want to be clear that narrowing the gap between espoused and actualized values is at the very heart of leadership work and is a constant and continuous process (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). However, something more is happening in this particular moment. The gap is widening and scholars, educators, and youth alike are taking notice. This is evident in the calls for leadership education to fulfill its intended purpose by better addressing issues of democracy, equity, and justice (Alvesson & Spicer, 2014; Carroll, Ford, & Taylor, 2015; Collinson, 2011; Dugan, 2017; Ospina & Foldy, 2009; Preskill & Brookfield, 2009; Western, 2013). Yet, to what degree are these calls truly heard? Are the issues of democracy, equity,

and justice still at the margins of leadership education or moving toward the center? How often do we fall back on "grand traditions" in leadership education (e.g., the usual pedagogies, the usual programs, the usual content, the usual participants) versus challenging the very assumptions that undergird our work?

The inflection point we are currently experiencing illustrates the radical importance of now. We will either act or not. As authors, we believe that action is essential and that a shift from leadership development to critical leadership development provides a starting point for narrowing the gap between espoused and actualized values.

What Is Critical Leadership Development?

Leader development is defined as "the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes" (van Velsor & McCauley, 2004, p. 2) while *leadership development* involves "enhancing the capacity of teams and organizations to engage successfully in leadership tasks" (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009, p. 299). But, what is leadership?! Note that both definitions tautologically use the very word they are attempting to define in the definition itself, and therein lies the problem. What precisely are we developing in terms of leadership? Far too often, that question is left unanswered and the concept of leadership defaults to a dangerous assumption of shared understanding.

Critical leadership development examines how taken-for-granted assumptions, power, and inequity influence how leader roles and leadership processes are understood, experienced, and enacted (Dugan, 2017). A key tenet undergirds this. We are socialized into our understandings of leadership and these understandings vary significantly from person to person. In essence, leadership development does not happen in a vacuum but is a function of the environments, cultures, and contexts in which we are nested.

The "critical" component of critical leadership development is drawn from *critical social theories*, which attempt to identify, make meaning of, and act on root causes that contribute to social stratification and inequity in society (Agger, 2013; Brookfield, 2005; Levinson et al., 2011). The goal of critical social theories is to stimulate the arc of progress toward "more democratic and just social arrangements" (Dugan, 2017, p. 32). This is accomplished through the application of critical perspectives to research, theory, and practice.

Critical perspectives represent meta-themes or distillations from the complex and expansive body of knowledge that comprises critical social theories. These meta-themes are topical or content areas that can be drilled down into as a means to examine taken-for-granted assumptions, power, and inequity. The depth of knowledge and skills with which a person engages critical perspectives is directly related to human development.

Thus, critical leadership development is not just about knowledge acquisition or capacity building but a process of meaning-making that acknowledges and interrogates social dynamics. Three critical perspectives, or meta-themes, are particularly rich and relevant for examining leadership education: (1) stocks of knowledge, (2) ideology/hegemony, and (3) social location. Table 1.1 provides definitions for each of these along with reflective questions that connect the critical perspectives to leadership education. The purpose of this volume is not to explore the critical perspectives in depth (see Dugan, 2017 for a more extensive exploration of these) but to examine how they interact with and are stimulated in the process of leadership development.

The Integrated Model of Critical Leadership Development

The integrated model of critical leadership development was first introduced as a means to illustrate how leadership theory, leadership development, and critical perspectives operate dynamically and concurrently (Dugan, 2017). Together, these three elements influence how a person understands, experiences, and enacts leader roles and leadership processes. Traditionally, leadership theory (i.e., the body of knowledge attempting to explain processes by which leadership unfolds) was considered a separate and distinct topic from leadership development. Theory reflected the formal acquisition of knowledge, while development reflected expanding sophistication in one's practice of leadership. Scholars identified this as a false dichotomy stressing that knowledge acquisition frames sensemaking and behavior while sensemaking and behavior in turn inform knowledge acquisition (Day et al., 2009; Heifetz, 2010). In other words, theory and development are inherently intertwined in a dynamic and mutually constitutive process.

The integrated model argues that critical perspectives are also inherently intertwined with leadership theory and development. The meta-themes introduced earlier are always at play in the context of leadership but often remain invisible or go unaddressed. Critical perspectives make power dynamics explicit and bring to light how stocks of knowledge, ideology/hegemony, and social location influence both leadership theory and leadership development. Thus, the integrated model offers a means to conceptualize how these three elements (i.e., leadership theory, leadership development, critical perspectives) interact and, more importantly, how educators can intervene to accelerate and maximize leadership education.

The sections that follow walk through each element of the integrated model of critical leadership development (see Figure 1.1). Note that the model can be read and interpreted either by moving from the internal elements to the external elements or the inverse. When examining the importance of leadership theory as an influence on leadership development, we typically would start from the center. This allows us to clearly see how

Table 1.1   Critical Perspectives and Connections to Leadership
Development

Meta-Theme	Definition	Critical Reflection Questions
Stocks of knowledge	• Often subconscious perspectives that people are socialized to view as normal and presume to be accurate • No two people share the same stocks of knowledge and most go unchallenged • Stocks of knowledge aid in processing the vast amounts of information received on a daily basis	• What prototypes do you have about what a leader should look like and how they should behave? • What protocols do you believe should be followed in leadership processes? • What do you associate with good leadership versus bad leadership?
Ideology and hegemony	• Ideologies reflect assumptions about truth that are presumed to be obvious, desirable, and in service of the common good • Ideologies reinforce social rules and behaviors and are not necessarily bad unless they become rigid and operate to reinforce unjust social orders • Hegemony is a means of reinforcing a specific ideology in subtle ways that convince people that conforming to the ideology is in their best interest (even if it is not)	• Is there a presumption that all environments are democratic and that people can honestly and respectfully engage in leadership without reprisal? • How might adherence to specific ideologies/hegemony create in and out-groups in leadership processes? • In what ways does power influence leadership to reinforce particular understandings of authority? Are there ways in which you may be complicit in this?
Social location	• Represents the various identities that a person holds (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, faith tradition) that shape how they interact with and are perceived within a social system	• How does variation in social identity shape access to leadership development opportunities? • Whose knowledge is centered as valid and essential in the leadership development literature? • Are particular approaches to leadership (e.g., assertiveness, empathy, conflict) acceptable based on some social locations but not others?

exposure to a particular theory (e.g., transformational leadership, servant leadership, the social change model of leadership development) impacts how leadership is (1) understood, (2) enacted, (3) derived from varying developmental influences, (4) received favorably or unfavorably by the

Figure 1.1.   The Integrated Model of Critical Leadership Development.
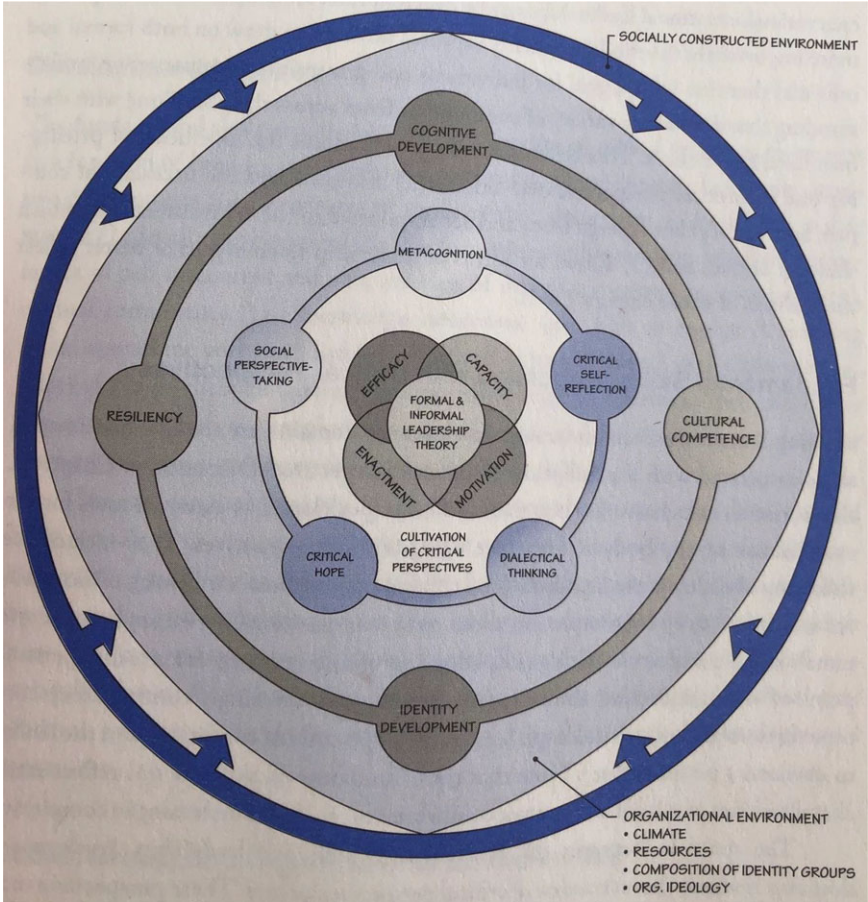
Adapted from Dugan (2017). Copyright 2017 by John Wiley & Sons. Reprinted with permission.

environment in which it is embedded, and (5) reinforces or challenges particular norms. The inverse approach (i.e., moving from external to internal) highlights the influences of leadership development on leadership theory. It illuminates how external, socially constructed forces influence human development and ultimately one's understanding of leadership. Regardless of the starting point, the model is meant to communicate interdependence between a person and their environment as well as the ways in which critical perspectives provide a unique lens to understand how theory and development are relationally intertwined.

   A quick glance at the model's illustration may feel intimidating. What do these terms even mean? Where would I begin if I were to build programs or curricula around this? These are fair questions, but we would ask

you to try and withhold judgment for now. The model is indeed complex, but we want to push you to see to the other side of complexity where each of the component parts contributes to a synergistic and greater whole. What may seem intimidating now, will hopefully seem intuitive later. We provide stimulus questions to assist in making direct connections to leadership education as well as bring to life each of the elements to support your understanding.

The Social System.   The broader social system in which a person is nested plays an enormous role in how leadership development unfolds. The *social system* can be understood as the context and conditions in which a person is raised and lives. These are the primary socializing forces that shape how a person makes meaning in the world. This includes culture and nationality; government, major institutions (e.g., religious, educational), and media; and family and local community. Acknowledging the social system as important goes far beyond a simple statement that context matters. Each of these forces is an agent of socialization actively shaping stocks of knowledge, ideologies/hegemony, and social location.

Note that in the model, the broader social system is not represented as just a circle, but one that has arrows pushing inward. This is to convey that socialization forces are dynamic and constantly pressuring individuals to assimilate to dominant norms. The social system is a direct and pervasive influence on each of the other elements in the model.

Thus, leadership development always begins by interrogating how the social system structures individuals' and groups' understandings of leadership. Sometimes these norms are conscious and easily identifiable while other times they are subconscious and invisibly influence one's understanding, experience, and enactment of leadership. Regardless, the goal is to build the capacity for individuals to recognize these forces and their influences on leadership development. Below are stimulus questions that draw into question how the social system might be taken into account in leadership development processes:

- How are youth introduced to the concept of leadership? Is leadership presumed to be inherently positive? How is space created for youth who believe leadership is, or can be, negative? Are youth encouraged to define leadership based on their own socialization experiences in leadership development processes?
- To what extent are youth encouraged to identify visible and invisible pressures to assimilate to dominant norms by the social system when introducing pedagogies, content, and experiences meant to stimulate leadership development?

The Environment.   The *organizational environment* is represented in the model by the interior diamond and reflects our places of employment, group affiliations, and social contexts. Traditionally, this is what leadership

scholars are concerned with when they assert the importance of context. The model positions the environment as most directly influenced by the social system. This is because the environments we navigate are structured by the social system infusing norms, rules, laws, and order. These environments become vehicles for reinforcing ideology/hegemony. They replicate and reproduce dominant understandings of what leadership should be like and how leadership development should unfold.

Complicating matters, each environment may take a nuanced approach in how it reproduces dominant norms. For example, the U.S. social system is characterized by capitalism. One organization may attempt to reproduce the goals of capitalism by creating complex and rigid hierarchies that they believe contribute to productivity. Another organization might take the opposite approach creating little hierarchy and motivating people based on myths of meritocracy, competition, and individual achievement. Both of these approaches are in service of the same goal of reproducing through the environment the dominant norms of the social system.

Thus, leadership development is a function of not only the social system in which one is embedded but also the environmental contexts that are attempting to reproduce the values of the system. This influences how organizations approach leadership development. In turn, we each carry with us the "baggage" of our environmental experiences. This baggage informs what we believe leadership development should be like as well as how we understand, experience, and enact leadership.

Here is where a *critical* leadership development approach becomes essential. It does not position people as subject to the social systems and environments in which they are embedded. Instead, critical leadership development offers an approach that activates youths' agency (i.e., the ability to shape and control one's own life; Kincheloe, 2008) to identify, understand, navigate, and disrupt these dynamics. This reflects a radical shift from surviving within systems and environments to thriving within them.

The prompt questions below offer considerations tying the environment to leadership education:

- To what extent do initiatives help youth draw connections between the social system and the environment and how they inform one another? Can youth name, comprehend, and navigate situations where an understanding of leadership may not translate between environments even when the same dominant norms are at play?
- Have educators considered how their environments contribute to perceptions that align leadership programs with elitism? How might this shape who applies, who is selected, and who attends programs? In what ways might this reflect dominant norms tied to stocks of knowledge (e.g., leaders are born not made), ideology/hegemony (e.g., whiteness, individualism), or social location (e.g., financial resources)?

Table 1.2   Developmental Factors Associated with Critical Leadership Development

Dimension	Definition
Cognitive development	Structures of thinking that shape how an individual makes meaning
Cultural competence	Knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in learning about, empathizing with, and interacting effectively across cultures
Identity development	The formation, understanding, and fluid performance of self in context and as a member of multiple, intersecting social groups
Resilience	Ability to persist through adversity and positively cope with stress

Developmental Factors.   The next movement in the model marks a distinct shift toward individual and group development. *Developmental factors* represent dimensions of psychological and human capital that are not static traits but dimensions of development that can be cultivated over time. The model offers four examples of developmental factors (i.e., cognitive development, cultural competence, identity development, and resilience), although this list is not meant to be exhaustive. Each of the developmental factors plays an enormous role in framing how a person makes meaning of and engages with the world. See Table 1.2 for definitions.

The developmental factors are shaped by the system and environment. For example, a person's development of resilience may be influenced by their social location in society and the degree to which they match or mismatch dominant norms demographically, attitudinally, or behaviorally. This match or mismatch may create conditions in which developing resilience is a necessity, happens earlier in life, and/or is underdeveloped.

Because each of the major elements of the model is interdependent, developmental factors in turn shape each element that follows when moving inward. Scholarship supports the influence of these factors on how individuals and groups understand, experience, and enact leader roles and leadership processes (Bertrand Jones, Guthrie, & Osteen, 2016; Chin & Trimble, 2015; Dugan, Kodama, Correia, & Associates, 2013; Foldy, Goldman, & Ospina, 2008; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005). For example, gains in cognitive complexity contribute to the ability to see beyond staunch binaries (e.g., good/bad, right/wrong). In leadership development, this allows for disruption of false dichotomies that position leaders/followers or management/leadership as mutually exclusive concepts.

It is not unusual for leadership education programs to recognize the ways in which developmental factors correlate with leadership development. However, the degree to which developmental factors are centered in the leadership development process varies considerably. Far too often,

Table 1.3   Fundamental Abilities to Engage with Critical Leadership Development

Dimension	Definition
Metacognition	Thinking about how one thinks
Critical self-reflection	Deep contemplation about one's own positionality within broader systems
Dialectical thinking	Holding two seemingly contradictory concepts constant and understanding how they mutually reinforce one another (good/bad, love/hate)
Critical hope	Realistic appraisal of conditions grounded in an equity and justice lens, coupled with the ability to envision a better future
Social perspective-taking	Ability to recognize the viewpoints of others as well as empathize with them

leadership development is squarely focused on skill building, knowledge acquisition, or fostering competence. Each of these is important and should certainly continue. However, there is a need to recognize that cultivating skills, knowledge, and competence is undergirded and driven by fostering the developmental factors. Below are several prompt questions tying the developmental factors to leadership development:

• To what extent do leadership development programs stimulate underlying developmental factors? Are certain factors treated as convenient byproducts (e.g., resilience) rather than purposefully stimulated? Are the factors positioned as equally important and centered in program design versus decentered or seen as tangential (e.g., cultural competence)?
• To what degree is there recognition that critical perspectives (i.e., stocks of knowledge, ideology/hegemony, social location) deeply influence developmental factors and that this necessitates multidimensional approaches to meet youth needs?

Fundamental Abilities to Engage With Critical Perspectives.   Flowing from developmental factors are fundamental abilities necessary for integrating critical perspectives. These include, but are not limited to, metacognition, critical self-reflection, dialectical thinking, critical hope, and social perspective-taking (see Table 1.3 for definitions). Similar to the developmental factors, the fundamental abilities are dynamic and can increase in complexity over time. *Fundamental abilities* reflect higher-order dimensions of the developmental factors. For example, skills associated with metacognition and dialectical thinking are more easily accessed as one's cognitive development increases. This illustrates further just how interdependent elements of the integrated model are with one another.

Cultivating fundamental abilities is essential to the critical leadership development process. Not only do they enhance abilities already important in leadership development (e.g., self-awareness, sensemaking, reasoning), they also provide the developmental resources necessary to explicitly engage with critical perspectives. For example, critical self-reflection extends one's capacity from general self-awareness to the ability to understand one's position within the social system and environment.

Additionally, the development of fundamental abilities is shaped by preceding elements in the model while simultaneously shaping those that follow them. For example, one's metacognitive ability is often a function of social location and the degree to which a person has been encouraged within familial and learning environments to actively engage with knowledge as an agentic knower in their own right. In turn, metacognitive abilities aid a person in unpacking the stocks of knowledge that inform how they understand, experience, and enact leadership.

Many of the chapters in this volume are tied directly to fundamental abilities. They provide concrete and pragmatic ways to cultivate critical self-reflection (see Chapter 3), metacognition (see Chapter 4), and critical hope (see Chapter 7) in the critical leadership development process. Stimulus questions include:

- Is the cultivation of higher-order abilities a priority for your leadership programs? Where are you discretely embedding curricula and cocurricula that help move youth from reflection to critical reflection, cognitive reasoning to contextualizing and interrogating reasoning, and/or critical thinking to action?
- How often does your program position social justice, transformation, and innovation as central to and an outcome of leadership efforts? Is this coupled with a deep commitment to also helping youth learn how to maintain the critical hope necessary to navigate and overcome barriers, disappointments, failures, and/or resistance?

The Four Domains of Development.   This is the point where we start to address leadership development more directly, although as authors of this chapter, our hope is that readers will begin to think of everything that has come before this as just as essential to the developmental process. All of the prior elements of the model shape four primary domains of leadership development (i.e., capacity, enactment, motivation, efficacy). Each of these domains is interrelated (see Table 1.4 for definitions) and collectively they bring to fruition how a person understands, experiences, and enacts leadership (Dugan, 2017).

There exists no universal definition of leadership and as such the concept is ultimately a function of the sense that a person makes of it (Dugan, 2017). Hopefully by now, you are seeing how the sense a person makes of leadership is a direct function of each of the preceding elements of the

Table 1.4   The Four Domains of Critical Leadership Development

Dimension	Definition
Leadership capacity	An individual or a group's knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with fulfilling the leader role or the leadership process
Leadership enactment	The functional practice of leader roles or leadership processes through behavioral action; leadership capacity in action
Leadership motivation	The drive to engage in leader roles and leadership processes which may originate from a variety of sources (e.g., internal, external)
Leadership efficacy	Internal beliefs about whether one would be successful when engaging in leader roles and/or leadership processes

integrated model: the system, the environment, developmental factors, and fundamental abilities. It is also deeply influenced by critical perspectives: stocks of knowledge, ideology/hegemony, and social location.

Sensemaking about leadership is also derived from both the formal theory to which a person may or may not be exposed and the informal theories that are socially constructed around them by the system and environment (Dugan, 2017). This positions sensemaking about leadership as both malleable and oftentimes subconscious. The four domains of leadership, then, bring to life that sensemaking. The capacities a person associates with leadership will differ based on their sensemaking as will their motivations, efficacy, and ultimately their enactment of leader roles and leadership processes. The questions below illustrate how the four domains of leadership development draw on each of the other elements in the model to dictate how leadership is understood, experienced, and enacted:

- To what extent do programs recognize and address how social location may differentially affect the leadership domains? Do programs provide opportunities to explore how social identity (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) may leverage or constrain motivation and efficacy? Is the ability to enact leadership capacities presumed to occur in a vacuum or taught as a function of influences of the social and environmental systems?
- How might ideological differences, particularly related to power and authority, shape what and how a person learns about leadership? Do programs offer opportunities to learn how to recognize the ways in which this occurs and is perpetuated?

Pulling Together a Cohesive Whole.   The process of critical leadership development involves increasing the complexity of a person's sensemaking about leadership and the systems and environments in which it unfolds. This in turn shapes youths' leadership capacity, motivation,

efficacy, and enactment. Let us use an example to bring the parts of the model together as a cohesive whole. Imagine a young person with high leadership capacities. This is an individual who has attended nearly every leadership training, taken every leadership course, and in small group contexts routinely enacts leadership effectively. You have evidence that capacity and motivation are both present. Yet, this individual has not taken their leadership capacity to scale. They express a desire to take on positional leader roles, increase their scope of impact in a passion area, or play a more influential role within a larger team. Despite articulating this desire and having the requisite capacity to enact leadership in these ways, they simply do not.

Traditional models of leadership development are still somewhat helpful with this dilemma. One might quickly point out that the issue could be leadership efficacy. Despite having the necessary capacity and motivation to enact leadership, this individual may have reached a developmental plateau. By cultivating leadership efficacy, you could stimulate the development necessary for this young person to enact their capacity and reach their goals. The literature on leadership efficacy also gives us a number of tactical approaches for engaging in this work (Bandura, 1997). But, what if those traditional approaches to cultivating leadership efficacy are not the real issue at play?

This is where a *critical* leadership development approach is helpful and offers multiple avenues for working with the young person. Let us explore two unique possibilities. First, let us assume that leadership efficacy is indeed the issue. Bandura (1997) offered four ways to stimulate its development. However, these tactics are largely devoid of context. Critical leadership development compels us to resituate the issue not as a deficit of the individual but as a potential constraint associated with the system and/or environment. Perhaps the young person's efficacy is diminished because they do not see themselves represented in the leadership work they wish to accomplish. Are there role models who share similar identities? Have clear pathways and trajectories been identified for them? Unfortunately, Bandura's work does not provide us with the necessary resources to address this. The adoption of critical perspectives, though, could assist with understanding the system in which leadership unfolds and why this contributes to differential representation among identity groups. Chapter 5 of this volume offers specific insights about what a critical approach to fostering leadership efficacy might look like.

Now, let us take a different tact and presume that the issue is not related to leadership efficacy at all. Perhaps this young person has taken stock of the system and the environment in which they are embedded. Perhaps this realistic appraisal is cause for concern. Maybe there are few people who reflect their identities engaged in the work. Maybe their passions require a substantial disruption of the status quo, and they have considered the emotional toll and labor associated with engaging in this work. A traditional leadership development approach might suggest that the "real" issue is their

level of motivation. Again, the default might be to problematize the young person.

A *critical* leadership development approach would validate the young person's realistic appraisal of the context and acknowledge the substantive barriers and tolls associated with enacting leadership in pursuit of their passions. This approach might also foreground the development of critical hope. This involves not just optimism but realistic appraisal combined with the ability to envision a better future. The fundamental ability of dialectic thinking is also of use here. The ability to hold constant the realistic assessment of the environment and its dangers with the ability to envision a different future is essential. The young person may be totally right not to scale their leadership any further in the given context, or an infusion of critical hope and dialectical thinking may help them determine what incremental gains would be worthy of their investment. In both of these scenarios, the adoption of a critical leadership development lens alters the assumptions of how development is unfolding. It also centers a different set of intermediate outcomes (e.g., fundamental abilities) essential in shaping how people understand, experience, and enact leadership.

Three Steps for Integrating Critical Leadership Development

We close this chapter with the recognition that what we have laid out is not easy. It does not offer a simple or prescriptive path forward for leadership education. That, however, is the point. What we need is greater complexity and an ability to forecast alternative possibilities if we are to bend toward the arc of progress at this moment of inflection in leadership education.

Although we cannot provide you with the answer, this volume does offer entry points for reimagining our shared work. Each of the chapter authors outlines pragmatic ways to think differently about leadership education and bring to life the integrated model of critical leadership development. To supplement their efforts, we would add the following recommendations.

The Work Always Starts at Home.   It may seem intuitive, but it merits constant restatement. We cannot ask youth to engage in work we are not willing and able to do ourselves. Komives (2000) said it best when she reminded us that "the real bottom line is that our own lives abound with examples of incongruences in our own knowledge and actions. We need to inhabit our own gaps" (p. 32). In the case of leadership education, these gaps relate directly to the omission of critical perspectives and the ways in which this widens rather than narrows the distance between espoused and actualized values. What learning do you need to personally take on to narrow our values gap and be part of the arc toward progress?

Stop Underestimating Youths' Readiness to Learn.   Critical perspectives position leadership development as a reciprocal and collective learning process. Whether we acknowledge it or not, we are always learning *with*

our students. When we purposefully create the space to do so, the impact is far more powerful. We want to encourage leadership educators to live into this idea, which requires that we stop underestimating youths' readiness to learn. Developmental readiness is an important factor in leadership development. However, our assessment of developmental readiness is often tinged by adultism and a belief that we know better (see Chapter 2 for more on this). What really lies behind decisions to delay the introduction of critical perspectives or invest in the development of higher-order abilities? As leadership educators, we need to ask ourselves hard questions about whether these decisions have more to do with the work it requires of us or the work youth are prepared to do. At what point are we introducing content and ways of thinking about leadership that reinforce dominant norms that later require youth to engage in an "unlearning" process?

Invest in Meaning-Making. In the highly individualistic and achievement-oriented culture of the United States, fostering the development of concrete skills, knowledge, and competencies often trumps the cultivation of meaning-making. Both of these, however, need to go hand in hand. Advancing a critical approach to leadership development necessitates an investment in cognitive reasoning. It requires that the fundamental abilities associated with metacognition, dialectical thinking, and social perspective-taking be pushed from the margins to the center of the leadership development process. These are much less tangible concepts but ones that pay dividends when purposefully developed. These dividends are essential for engaging with critical perspectives. How might you restructure your curricula and cocurricula to provide a more robust approach to building youths' meaning-making capacities?

Social Location. Social Location. Social Location. Far too often leadership studies presume one-size-fits-all approaches to leadership development. In some cases, shoddy research replicating dominant norms even attempts to persuade us that social location does not play a role in how leadership is understood, experienced, and enacted. This is just flat-out wrong. If leadership educators were to invest in one area to advance critical leadership development, it should be around the topic of social location. It offers a natural starting point for intervention and reconstructing our work. To what degree are your programs offering complex treatments of social location through their design, content, and pedagogies?

Closing

We opened this chapter by articulating that we are at an inflection point in leadership education. As the perfect societal storm strengthens, questions about leadership education will grow louder. We have a choice to own our individual and collective roles in pushing theory, research, and practice into new and unknown territories or allow the storm to pass. The former comes with the opportunity for reinvention and innovation. It is attractive because

of the possibilities it creates for us to think and engage in our work in new and different ways. However, it necessitates an openness to critique, significant labor to alter the very practices we love and are comfortable with, and a willingness to let go of control and not just make room at the table but reconstruct the table entirely. A choice to hope the storm will simply pass is more convenient. It maintains the status quo and business as usual. There is less to learn and the labor is lighter —at least for those whose identities created and maintain the current table at which leadership education sits.

When we look back at this moment 20 years from now, our hope as authors of this chapter is that we will clearly see an arc toward progress. Perhaps an investment in critical leadership development will have brought us closer to alignment between our espoused and actualized values in leadership education. This requires, however, that we have the foresight to act now.

One of the greatest forecasters in leadership education, Komives (2000) pointed out the need to "inhabit the gaps" between our espoused and actualized values (p. 32). She reminded us:

> The incongruence around us should lead us to inhabit these work practice gaps. We need to engage in new processes that will help us come to a meaningful understanding of why what our office or department may know and intend is so vastly different from what we do. The process of inhabiting our personal and institutional gaps perhaps models the learning process at its best. (p. 32)

Leaning into this learning, rather than retracting, contributes to the arc of progress we so desperately need and that youth and society deserve.

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JOHN P. DUGAN is the director of program quality, design, and assessment for the Youth & Engagement Programs division of the Aspen Institute. He is the principal investigator for the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (www.leadershipstudy.net) and has authored and presented extensively on the topic of leadership theory and development.

ALYSSA D. HUMBLES serves as the Coordinator for Academic Advising and Student Success Initiatives at Oakton Community College. She earned her Master's in Higher Education from Loyola University Chicago. For over eight years, she has specialized in college readiness programming as well as the retention and graduation of students. Her work allows her to identify, support and improve access and affordability as well as confront equity issues within post-secondary education.